

Watervliet Arsenal
Officer's Quarters
(Quarters 3)
Mordecai Drive north of the intersection
of Mordecai Drive and Stewart Road
Watervliet
Albany County
New York

HABS No. NY-5521F

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

WATERVLIET ARSENAL
OFFICER'S QUARTERS
(Quarters 3)

HABS No. NY-5521F

Location: Mordecai Drive, north of the intersection of Mordecai Drive and Stewart Road, Watervliet Arsenal, Watervliet, Albany County, New York.

USGS Troy South Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 18.605939.4730550

Present Owner: U.S. Army

Present Occupant: Maj. and Mrs. H. L. Waldron

Present Use: Family housing - officer

Significance: Erected in 1889, this building is one of two similar quarters built to house an increased officer staff necessitated by establishment of the Army's gun factory at Watervliet. Located in the housing area developed at the north side of the arsenal in the nineteenth century, it is a good example of a Queen Anne style residence.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: An appropriation of \$20,000 was made in 1888 for the construction of two officer's quarters. The construction contract was awarded in May 1889, and the building was completed in December (Report of the Secretary of War, 1890, p. 141).
2. Architect: Not known.
3. Original and subsequent owners: U.S. Army
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: The builder was Edward Kelly of Troy, New York (Report of the Secretary of War, 1890, p. 142). According to the specifications published in the 1889 Report of the Secretary of War (p. 286), the foundation walls were to be built of stone originally used in the construction of the Arsenal building adjacent to the commandant's quarters. Since the Arsenal building was demolished in 1889, the stone may have been reused for the foundation of the quarters.

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5. Original plans and construction: In April 1888 the arsenal's commander, Col. J. M. Whittemore, submitted plans to the Ordnance Department for two sets of officer's quarters based on plans for quarters that were to be built at Fort Riley, Kansas (Kyle, p. 376). Since these drawings were not located, it is uncertain whether they also provided the basis for the Watervliet quarters.

The specifications and a drawing for the principal elevation were published in the Report of the Secretary of War for 1889 (Appendix 22, pp. 286-293 and Plate IV). A set of six drawings for Quarters 2 (HABS Photo No. NY-5521E-7 through HABS Photo No. NY-5521E-12), including side elevations and floor plans, is on file in the arsenal's Engineering Division. Although undated, they may be the preconstruction drawings for both Quarters 2 and 3, since they illustrate a slightly larger house with more terra cotta string course detailing. The Report of the Secretary of War for 1890 (p. 141) notes that the houses were diminished in size, and some detailing and plumbing deleted to reduce construction costs.

6. Alterations and additions: Few alterations have been made to the house since its construction. The rear porch was probably added about 1906 when the rear porch was added to Quarters 2. According to plans in the Engineering Division, the attic story was finished to provide servants' quarters in 1919, and a fire escape ladder and platform were added on the southeast side in 1958. The pantry between the kitchen and dining room was removed at some time after 1941.

B. Historical Context:

In 1887 Watervliet Arsenal was designated the Army's gun factory, setting off a building program which lasted into the mid-1890s. Two sets of officer's quarters (Quarters 3 and 2, HABS No. NY-5521E) were among the earliest structures erected under this program. Completed in 1889, the two are located in the residential area developed during the nineteenth century to house the arsenal's highest ranking officers. The building still serves as officer's family housing. (For further documentation see HAER No. NY-1A.)

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This two-and-one-half story house exhibits the picturesque massing and varied use of materials characteristic of the Queen Anne style. Its exuberance contrasts

with the more restrained character of the other nineteenth-century quarters in the housing area at the north side of the arsenal.

2. Condition of fabric: The building is in good condition and is well maintained.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The irregularly-shaped building measures approximately 46' 2" (southeast) x 68' 10" with bays on the northeast, southwest, and southeast sides. A porch wraps around the southeast and northeast sides, and smaller porches are located on the northwest and southwest sides. The house is two-and-one-half stories with full basement and attic. The bay at the south end of the southwest side is one-story. Remaining bays are two-and-one-half stories.
2. Foundations: Foundations are random coursed ashlar limestone with a beveled stone water table that is painted gray.
3. Walls: Walls are brick laid in 7/1 common bond painted gray. Narrow molded brick string courses almost completely encircle the house at sill level on the first and second stories and at lintel level across the front and northeast bay. An ornamental terra cotta panel with a floral design is set below corbelled courses in a false window opening on the second floor of the southeast side. Gable ends of the bays are covered with scalloped wood shingles.
4. Structural system, framing: Walls are load bearing, 20" thick in the basement and 12" thick on the first and second floors. The roof is supported by timber trusses.
5. Porches: A one-story, screened porch wraps around the southeast and southwest sides of the house. Seven tapered wood Ionic columns set on wood bases support a decorated frieze and flat roof. The balustrades have square balusters, and the newel posts at the base of the wood steps are squared. A segmental pediment sits above the entrance on the southeast side. The porch deck and ceiling are wood.

An open, one-story porch set on brick piers extends partially across the rear elevation. Four square posts with chamfered corners support the metal shed roof. The plain wood balustrade has square balusters. The deck, ceiling, and stairs are wood. The west corner of the porch is enclosed with beaded wood paneling.

A small, open, entrance porch is located on the southwest side. A single square post and four scrolled brackets support the shed roof. The balusters and newel posts are square. The steps and deck are wood.

6. Chimneys: Interior chimneys rise from the ridge at the front of the house, from north of the juncture of the bay on the southwest side, and from the bay on the northeast side. A fourth chimney rises from just above the water table to cut through the cornice on the northeast side. All are brick with beaded corners, stone banding, and corbelled brick caps.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The main entrance on the southeast consists of double-leaf wood doors with raised panels and large single beveled lights. The three doors on the southwest and northwest sides are paneled wood with two-light transoms. A set of double-leaf French doors with a single-light transom are set in the south corner of the bay on the northeast side of the house. The doors open onto the wrap-around porch.
 - b. Windows: Typical windows at the front of the house are one-over-one-light, double-hung wood sash arranged singly or in pairs. At the rear, windows are two-over-two-light, double-hung wood sash. Sills are rock faced stone. Lintels are either stone or brick segmental arches or stone flat arches. First story windows on the front elevation west of the porch and those on the east face of the bay on the northeast side have rock faced quoin surrounds. Windows in the gable ends of the bays are paired fifteen-over-one-light, double-hung wood sash with paneled pilasters, a decorated frieze, and molded wood cornice. Dormers have multilight sash.
8. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: The roof over the front of the house is a steep hip intersected by a gable on the southeast. At the rear, the roof is a truncated hip intersected by gables on the northeast and southwest. All are covered with asphalt shingles.
 - b. Cornice, eaves: The molded boxed cornice is bracketed and has a plain wood frieze. The corners of the gable over the polygonal bay on the northeast side are supported by large wood brackets.

- c. Dormers: Shed dormers with molded cornices punctuate the northeast and southeast sides of the steep hip roof at the front of the house and the northeast, northwest, and southwest sides of the truncated hip roof at the rear of the house.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans

- a. Basement: The basement consists of three rooms on the east and three rooms on the west. The stairs from the first floor open into the room in the northwest corner.
 - b. First floor: The main entrance on the southeast opens onto a large stair hall with the stairs in the southeast corner. North of the stair hall is the dining room and a narrow hall leading to the kitchen in the northeast corner. To the west of the stair hall is the living room, then the library, the vestibule at the northwest door, a powder room, and the service stairs. A laundry room and pantry are in the northwest corner. (See supplemental material, floor plan)
 - c. Second floor: The main stairs lead to an L-shaped hall off which five bedrooms and three bathrooms open. (See supplemental material, floor plan)
 - d. Attic: The attic is accessible only by the service stairs at the rear of the house. The stairs lead to a central hall off which four rooms and a bathroom open. A small room is located in the northwest corner. (See supplemental material, floor plan)
2. Stairways: The main stairway in the southeast corner is open, two flights with a landing (HABS Photo No. NY-5521F-4). The heavy newels, turned balusters arranged two to a tread, rail, treads, and risers are painted. The service stairs at the rear of the house are enclosed, straight-run and have a plain wood rail.
3. Flooring: Basement floors are concrete. Floors in the stair hall, living room, library, dining room, and bedrooms are varnished, narrow-width boards. Floors in the remaining rooms on the first and second floors are linoleum or ceramic tile. Attic floors are painted, wide-width boards.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: Exterior basement walls are stone, and interior walls are brick or beaded vertical wood paneling. Walls in the stair hall, dining room, living room, library, bedroom, and upstairs hall are papered. Laundry room and kitchen walls are plaster. Bathroom walls are plaster or have a ceramic tile wainscot. Attic walls are beaded paneling or dry wall. Walls on the first and second floors have tall molded baseboards. On the first floor, ceilings in the living room, library, and dining room are plaster. The library and living room have deep, molded, plaster cornices. Remaining ceilings on the first floor are accoustical tile. Ceilings in the second floor bathrooms and the bedroom in the bay on the northeast side are accoustical tile. Remaining ceilings are plaster with a narrow plaster cornice. Attic ceilings are dry wall.
5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Typical doors on the first and second floors are five-panel wood in surrounds of molded trim with corner blocks. Between the library and living room, the stair hall and dining room, and the stair hall and living room are double, sliding, five-panel doors with molded trim and corner blocks.
 - b. Windows: Windows are set above wood panels and are framed by molded trim with corner blocks.
6. Decorative features and trim: In the living room, the fireplace is set diagonally across the northwest corner (HABS Photo No. NY-5521F-6). Its rectangular opening is framed by a brown glazed tile surround, fluted columns with bead trim, a frieze decorated with a leaf pattern, and a plain mantel shelf. The mantel is wood painted white. The hearth is glazed tile with a floral border.

In the dining room, the rectangular opening of the fireplace is framed by a brick surround and wood mantel with a frieze bearing an undulating design, and a plain mantel shelf. The hearth is small glazed bricks with a geometric mosaic tile border. The fireplace is set against the northeast wall.

Set diagonally across the southwest corner of the library, the fireplace opening is rectangular framed by a glazed tile surround. A round arch spanning the mantel and containing a grid of raised blocks surrounds the opening. The mantel shelf with a back is supported by brackets. Rows of small raised blocks decorate the corners below the shelf as well as the top edge of the shelf back. The hearth is glazed tile.

The stair hall fireplace is set against the chimney breast on the northeast wall (HABS Photo No. NY-5521F-4). Its rectangular opening is surmounted by a painted paneled wood frieze and simple mantel shelf. The glazed tile hearth has a geometric border. In the bedroom at the center of the southwest side, the rectangular opening of the fireplace is framed by paneled pilasters, a frieze ornamented with raised vertical and horizontal panels, and a plain shelf. The surround is wood painted white, and the hearth is glazed tile with a geometric border. The fireplace is set diagonally across the southwest corner of the room.

The fireplace on the northeast wall of the bedroom on the opposite side of the hall has wood pilasters below a plain mantel shelf. A narrow scalloped border runs below the shelf.

7. Mechanical equipment:

- a. Heating, air conditioning: Heated air is pumped from the furnace in the basement through metal floor grates. The house is cooled by central air conditioning.
- b. Lighting: Lighting is provided by modern incandescent ceiling fixtures.
- c. Plumbing: Except for a claw foot tub in the attic bathroom, plumbing fixtures are modern.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: Constructed near the arsenal's northern boundary wall, the building faces southeast onto Mordecai Drive east of Buffington Drive. It is surrounded by spacious lawns, curved tree-lined drives, and four additional family quarters. The arsenal's built-up industrial, maintenance, and administrative areas are located to the south and west.
2. Outbuildings: A one-story, brick, gable-roofed garage constructed in 1959 (Building 46) is located southwest of the house.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Architectural Drawings:

Officers Quarters, Second Floor Plan. No date. Watervliet Arsenal Engineering Division. (HABS Photo No. NY-5521F-8)

Alterations to Attic Floor of Quarters No. 2 and Quarters No. 3. May 15, 1919. Watervliet Arsenal Engineering Division. Incorporation of servants' quarters in the attic.

First and Second Floor Plans. March 1941.

Fire Escape Ladder and Platform for Quarters 2 and 3. October 1958. Watervliet Arsenal Engineering Division.

B. Early Views:

Southeast (front) and southwest elevations. Undated. Watervliet Arsenal Museum. (HABS Photo No. NY-5521F-7)

C. Bibliography:

Secondary and published sources:

Building Technology, Inc. Historic Properties Report Watervliet Arsenal, Watervliet, New York and Rotterdam Family Housing Area, Rotterdam, New York. January 1985. The report and inventory cards for the arsenal are filed as field records in the Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress under HAER No. NY-1A.

Kyle, Francis K. A History of Watervliet Arsenal. Watervliet, New York: Watervliet Arsenal, 1920. Quotes correspondence on plans, and construction. Copy available in the Watervliet Arsenal Museum.

U.S. Congress. House. Report of the Secretary of War. Vol. 2720, 1889. Contains specifications for construction of Quarters 2 and 3.

U.S. Congress. House. Report of the Secretary of War. Vol. 2836, 1890. Contains information on progress of construction and contractor.

D. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated:

Records of the Office of the Chief of Ordnance, Record Group 156, and Records of the Office of the Chief of Engineers, Record Group 77, Navy and Old Army Branch, National Archives, Washington, D.C. should be further investigated.

E. Supplemental Material:

First, Second, and Attic Floor Plans. No date. Three sheets.
Watervliet Arsenal Engineering Division. Current floor plans of the
building.

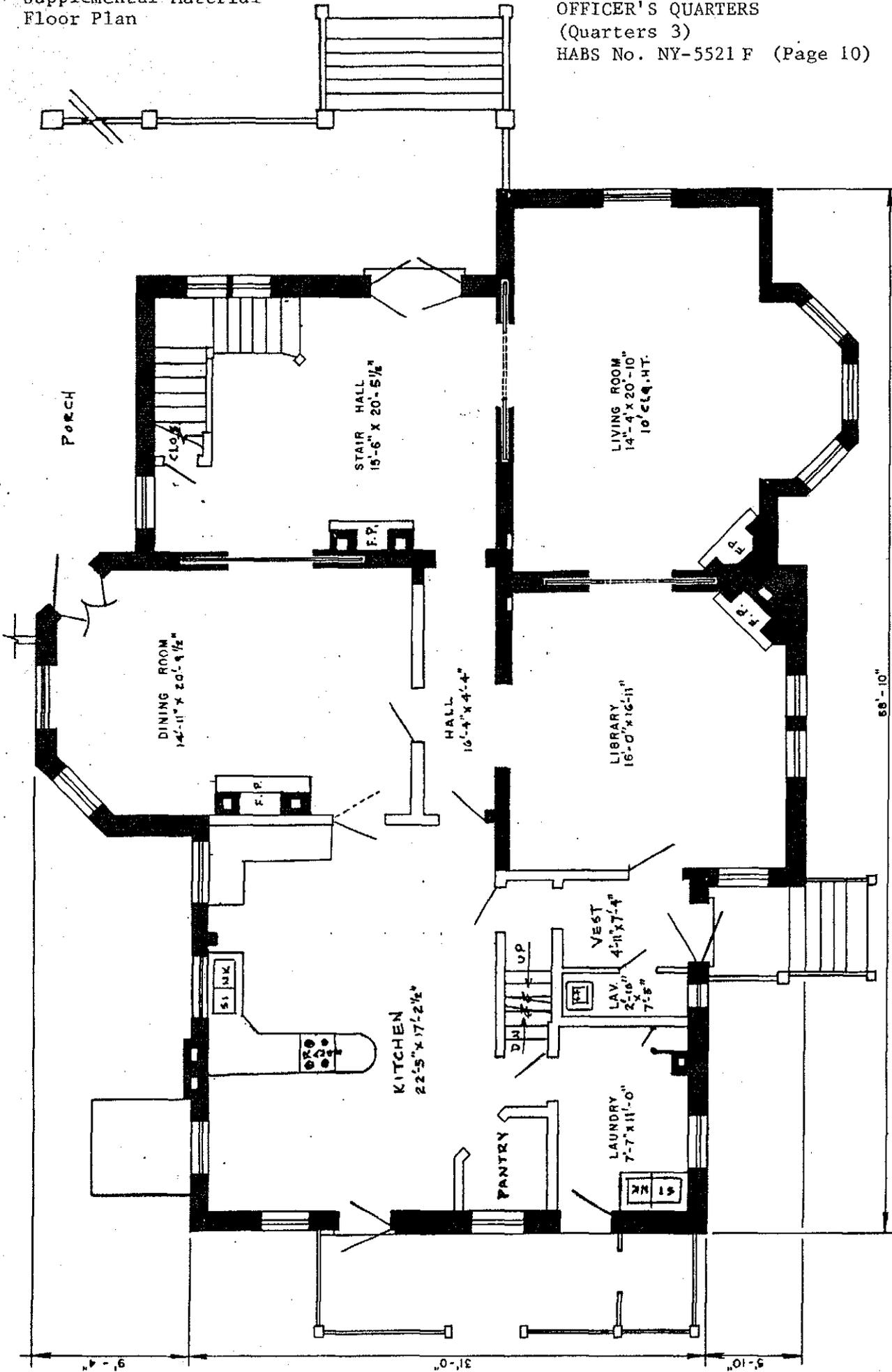
Prepared by: Barbara E. Hightower
Historian
MacDonald and Mack Partnership
February 1985

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was part of a program initiated through a memorandum of agreement between the National Park Service and the U.S. Department of the Army. Stanley H. Fried, Chief, Real Estate Branch of Headquarters DARCOM, and Dr. Robert J. Kapsch, Chief of the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record, were program directors. Sally Kress Tompkins of HABS/HAER was program manager, and Robie S. Lange of HABS/HAER was project manager. Under the direction of William A. Brenner, Building Technology Incorporated, Silver Spring, Maryland, acted as primary contractor, and MacDonald and Mack Partnership, Minneapolis, was a major subcontractor. The project included a survey of historic properties at Watervliet Arsenal, as well as preparation of an historic properties report and HABS/HAER documentation for 17 buildings. The survey, report, and documentation were completed by Barbara E. Hightower, historian, Minneapolis. The photographs were taken by Robert A. Ryan and J Ceronie of Dennett, Muessig, Ryan, and Associates, Ltd., Iowa City, Iowa. Drawings were produced by Gary M. Louris, Minneapolis.

E. Supplemental Material
Floor Plan

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OFFICER'S QUARTERS
(Quarters 3)
HABS No. NY-5521 F (Page 10)



WATERVLIEL ARSENAL
WATERVLIEL, N.Y.

Drawn by: J. R. GANSEMI, A.E. Appd. by: *J. R. Gansemi*
Revisions: _____ Date: _____

**FIRST FLOOR PLAN
OFFICERS QUARTERS
BUILDING NO. 3**

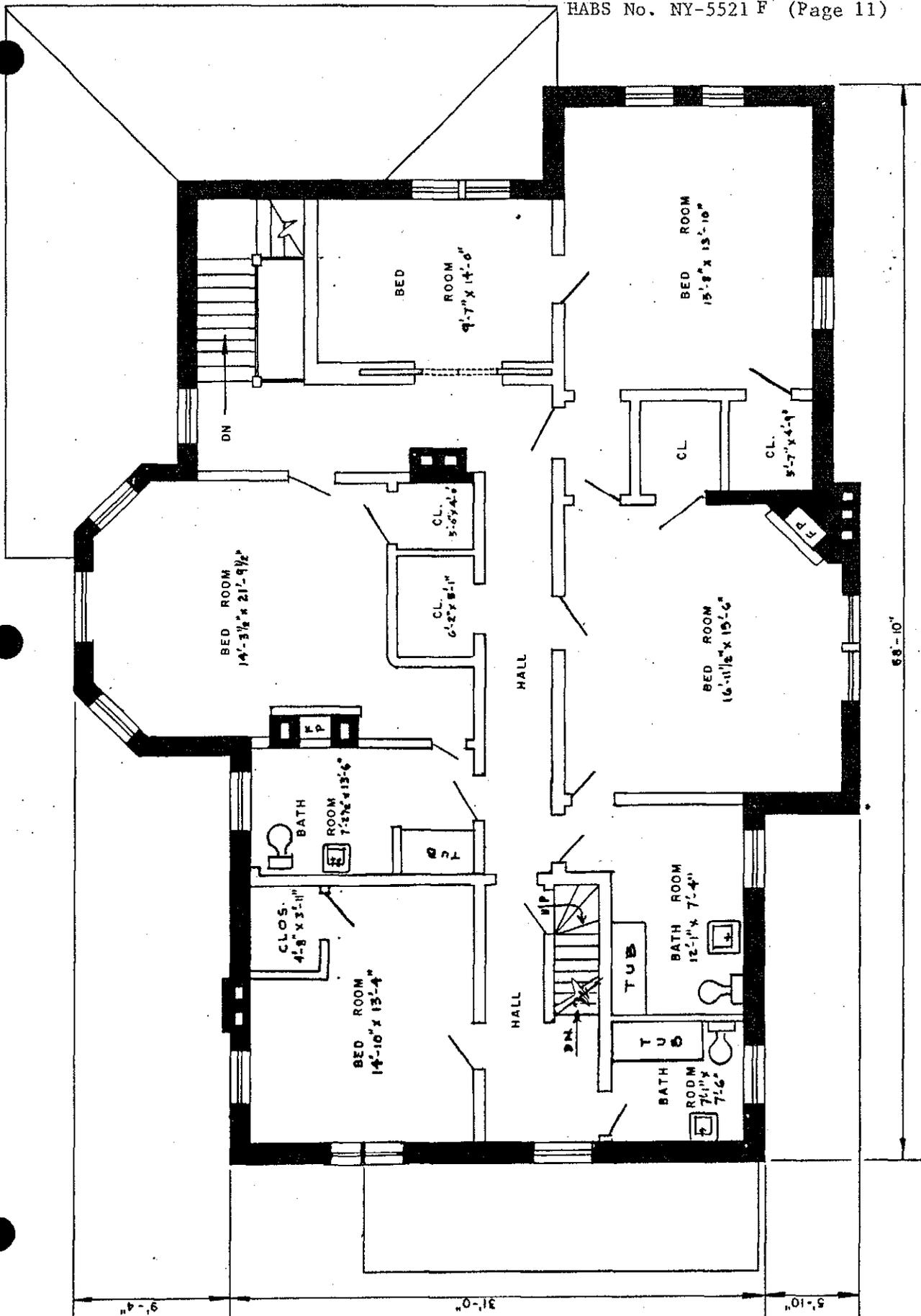
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NET FLOOR AREA
2,075
Square feet

FLOOR CAPACITY
Per square foot
10'-0" CLG. HT.

E. Supplemental Material
Floor Plan

WATERVLIET ARSENAL
OFFICER'S QUARTERS
(Quarters 3)
HABS No. NY-5521 F (Page 11)



WATERVLIET ARSENAL
WATERVLIET, N.Y.

Drawn by: J.R. GANGLI, A.E. App'd by: *[Signature]* Date: *[Date]*

Revisions: _____

**SECOND FLOOR
OFFICERS QUARTERS
BUILDING NO. 3**

NET FLOOR AREA
2,075
Square feet

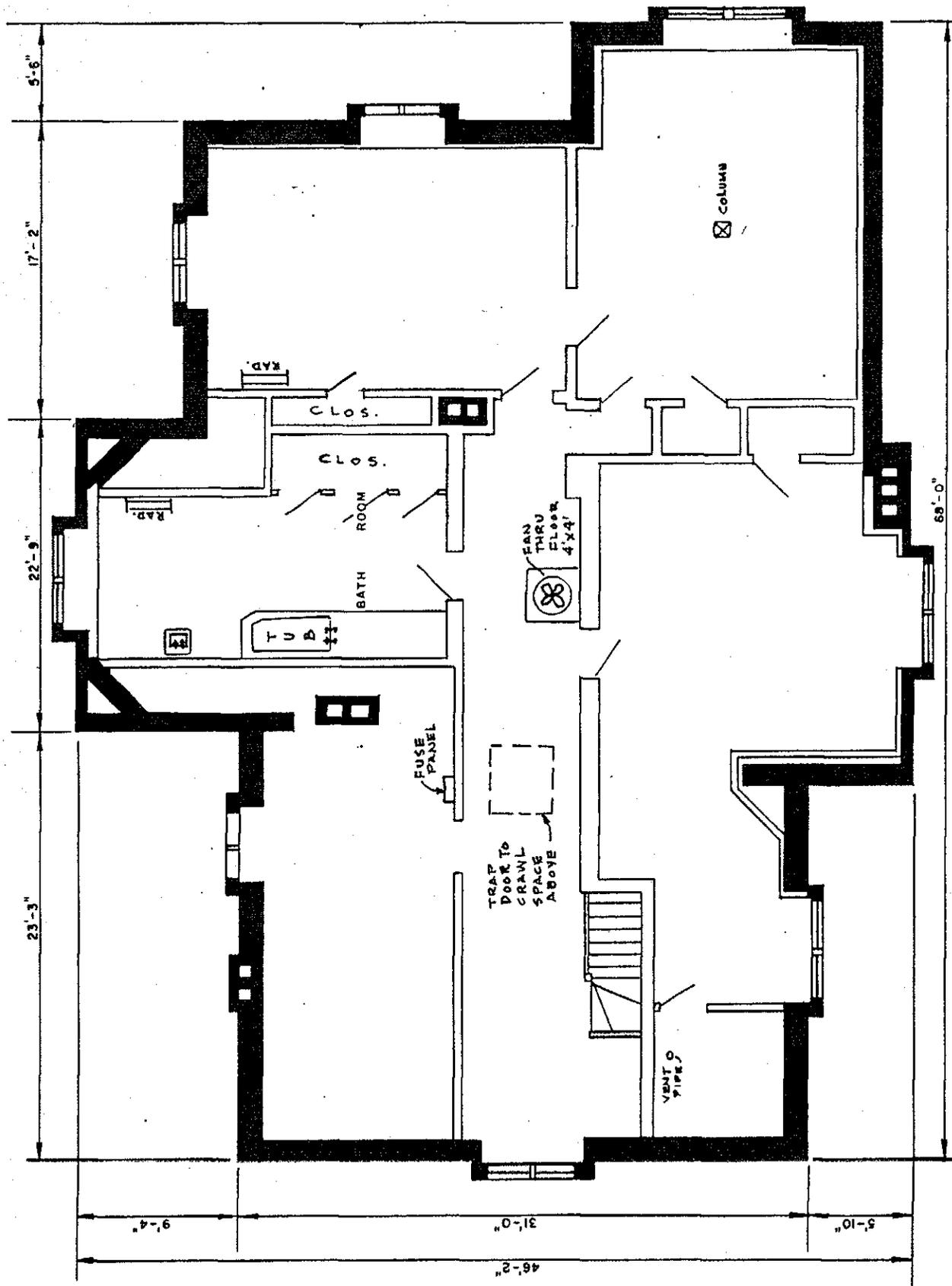
FLOOR CAPACITY
Per square foot

E. Supplemental Material
Floor Plan

WATERVLLET ARSENAL
OFFICER'S QUARTERS
(Quarters 3)
HABS No. NY-5521 F (Page 12)

WATERVLLET ARSENAL

WATERVLLET, N.Y.	
Drawn by: J.R. GANGLI, A.E.	App'd by: <i>J. R. Gangli</i>
Revisions	Date
ATTIC FLOOR PLAN OFFICERS QUARTERS BUILDING NO. 3	
Scale: 1/8" = 1'-0" Date:	



NET FLOOR AREA
2075
Square feet
FLOOR CAPACITY
40 LBS
Per square foot
9'-4" CLG. HT.